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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: SENATOR SPECTER ENGAGES KUWAITI LEADERS ON IRAQ,
IRAN, AND LEBANON

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary: During an August 18-19 visit to Kuwait, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) discussed current events in Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, as well as bilateral issues with Kuwait's Amir, Prime Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister. On Iraq, Amir Shaykh Sabah said despite mistakes made in the past, it was time for Iraqis to take charge. He urged U.S. and coalition troops to withdraw to outlying areas, leaving the security of cities to Iraqi forces. Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed said Iraq's future depended on the cohesion of a real coalition government. Kuwait's leadership shared U.S. concerns about Iran's role in the region and argued that events in Lebanon and Iranian defiance of U.S. and EU approaches only emboldened the regime. They called for continued dialog and cautioned that sanctions would lead Tehran to retaliate and small countries like Kuwait were in its path. The Amir welcomed the ceasefire in Lebanon and said UNIFIL forces could succeed if given a strong mandate. The PM recommended that UN peacekeepers come from countries acceptable to both Lebanon and Israel. Senator Specter and the Amir commended the strength of U.S.-Kuwaiti relations and agreed on the need to resolve the status of individuals detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. End Summary.

Iraq Needs a Real Coalition Government

12. (C/NF) Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) opened his August 19 joint meeting with Amir Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah with a discussion of the security situation in Iraq, soliciting from the Amir his views on how to block foreign support to insurgent groups and the start of a civil war. The Amir responded that he was not pessimistic, but did not expect Iraq to be stable for years to come. He said the current situation was a result of series of mistakes made by Iraqi leaders, Iran, and even the U.S. He encouraged the U.S. to speed up the training of Iraq's security forces, arguing that Iraqi control of the cities would help to calm the situation. He counseled that U.S. forces should avoid a presence in the cities. He did not believe that Iraqi forces were fully prepared to take over internal security, but he said they needed to be in charge yet able to call on the U.S. when assistance was needed. Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah echoed the Amir's remarks and said only a real coalition government would hold Iraq together.

GOK Cautious about Use of Sanctions on Iran

13. (C/NF) Turning to another regional concern, the Amir

told the Senator events in Lebanon only strengthened Iran's position, heightening its influence in the region and building confidence in the regime among Iran's people. The GOI's direct challenge to the U.S. and the EU also enhanced its standing. He remarked that Kuwait maintained cordial relations with Iran, but was fearful of its policies and nuclear ambitions. Kuwait feared a nuclear accident would pollute the Gulf, Kuwait's source of water desalination plants. In a separate meeting, the PM said that Iran's nuclear facilities were built with a hodge-podge of technology from Russia, Pakistan, China, and North Korea, and as a result, the GOK had no confidence in the reactors. He and the Amir advised Senator Specter that the GOK has shared its concerns with Iran's leaders, but the Amir explained it was hesitant to exert too much pressure on Iran lest it retaliate, noting that Iranians had been previously arrested for extremist activities in Kuwait. Commenting that Iran has rebuffed the U.S. and EU, the Amir questioned the influence of a small country like Kuwait. The PM, once Kuwait's ambassador to Iran, told Senator Specter the time to stop Iran's nuclear activities was more than four years ago. He questioned U.S. activism during that period and recommended open talks as the only way to influence Iran. Senator Specter responded that it was not possible to go back in time, but it was not too late to act and the U.S. welcomed Kuwait's views. Responding to the Senator's question about the imposition of sanctions, Shaykh Sabah advocated dialogue and negotiations, arguing that sanctions would likely antagonize Tehran.

With the Right Mandate, UNIFIL Can Succeed

¶4. (C/NF) On Lebanon, the Amir said UNIFIL forces could be successful if they were backed by a strong mandate and the

KUWAIT 00003393 002 OF 002

full Security Council. The PM recommended that peacekeepers come from countries respected by both sides to the conflict, suggesting forces from Scandinavia and South America. The Amir further urged the UNSC to make clear to SYG Annan what it expected from the organization and member states. He further regretted the loss of life on both sides of the border and, in discussing with the Senator a recent editorial by former National Security Advisor Scowcroft said if Israel reverted to the pre-1967 borders, Kuwait would be among the first countries to extend its support and recognition. The PM appealed to the U.S. to call on Israel to exercise restraint, saying the month-long conflict destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure and accomplished nothing.

Guantanamo: Detainees Will Be Held and Tried

¶5. (C/NF) Senator Specter thanked the Amir for Kuwait's support for U.S. and coalition activities in Iraq. The Amir replied that Kuwait and the U.S. had a long history of friendship which he hoped would lead to a speedy resolution of the status of six detainees still held at Guantanamo Bay. He asserted the GOK would detain and try them. Senator Specter informed the Amir that the Judiciary Committee, which he chairs, maintains an active interest in the detainee issue and said the status of all of those held at Guantanamo should be addressed.

¶6. (U) Senator Specter did not clear this message.

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LeBaron